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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

WALL-PAPER PATTERNS.



ANGINGS of paper for the wall have shown their popularity by the fact that thousands upon thousands of patterns are sent out yearly by manufacturers. Dealers, the representatives of the public taste, demand continuous novelties. As taste advances, the exactions of fancy are strengthened, and the efforts of designers stimulated. Whilst there is a growing demand for paper of fine quality, cheaper descriptions are produced in good coloring in much the same styles, the engraved cylinder taking the place of handwork. Even tapestry in these is closely imitated.

Large patterns prevail, and brilliant tints duly subordinated are more freely introduced.

Delicate gradations of hues, with light and shade effects—subtle and tender treatment without feebleness and dullness—are features in productions which the public readily accept. In the best class of designs we find, together with individual character, daintiness, elegance and animation. There is less fear than ever of introducing bright colors in wall paper for mural and ceiling decoration, especially in rooms resplendent with hangings, paintings, ornaments and richly upholstered furniture. Even for ordinary rooms taste inclines to greater vividness.

In fashionable patterns, yellow has fully asserted its great resources, from bright golden to ruddy orange tints; and there has been less effort with designers to quiet and tone its brilliancy. In large quantities it is subdued rather than intensified by gilding. Generally speaking flower patterns are least crowded; the ground is made a more decided feature.

Favorite colors in combination appear to be yellows, pinks, browns, blues and green, white showing as one of the high lights, the patterns softened in tone by dots, lines and dashes of gilt or golden bronze. Outside the main figures cast shadows are freely indulged in in arabesque, floriated, flower and leaf patterns. Thus we find a group of flowers partly enveloped in such a shade as would be created by rounded relief work, a mere sweep of almost formless darkened color, affecting the line of the portions falling on it, and thus varying their appearance. Any somberness in this style of pattern is corrected by high lights.

Freedom treatment, in other words less formality, characterizes the large figure designs which have increased in public taste, the repeats are more distant from each other, and details more varied than formerly. Prominent in flowers are expanded forms, faintly or lightly blooming, edged with leaves that connect with wandering tendrils, these set off by conventionalized flowers. We have at this moment in view a blue ground with indented gold lines massed closely in perpendicular order, throwing a shimmering gleam over the pattern, flowers lightly defined in a lighter blue than the ground, combined with white, yellow and brown, resting on nests of yellow brown and yellow leaves, that connect with budding stems and buds, beside their own proper colors, being touched off with yellow and gold and gold bronze, all seeming to emerge from some aerial depth, the slender wreath listlessly disposed, leaving the eye finally to rest on the pale forms of the large flowers, which furnish the key to the pattern.

An attractive type worked out in different schemes and styles consists of forms of the circular order, grouped single or double, in segmental lines, or dashes of color, these forms, whatever their character, being central points toward which the rest of the ornamentation converges. Some of the most charming of these centers are wild flowers fully blown, in the most delicate tints, thrown almost into relief by the dark leaves on which they rest, whilst trailing stems bearing smaller leaves, and flowers and buds, caught up loop-like or disposed with studied carelessness, or scattered separately, are presented in contrast with touches of brilliant color, such as red, purple, crimson and golden green, make up the tableau.

Others are of geometrical form, the forms and colors varied between the center and the circumference. Thus a center of blue will be circled by flowering forms in reddish brown, beyond which in succession come steel-blue, gold, brown, and again blue. Geometrical centers do not exclude flower-wreath treatment, informally disposed, in rest of pattern. One of these centers consists of an octagon bordered with gold, and radii drawn from the garnet-colored point to the circumference, containing in each section different shades of brown. Wall and ceiling patterns are provided that consist of circles composed of lines in metallic colors giving broken effects, but chiefly suitable to large spaces. These leave no point of rest for the eye, offering kaleidoscope views which the variations of tint save from monotony.

Diaper work covering the whole field of interspaces of figured grounds are in many instances tastefully superceded by fortuitously grouped or scattered small geometrical forms, each

in itself unobtrusive, but in their bafflingly-fanciful shapes playfully disporting, so as to leave no distinct image.

Silk-finished paper, the pattern on the ground in two shades, is in demand, the quietude of the contrast being pleasing and agreeable. A silk paper with dull gold ground, flowers in blue, pink, green and yellow, and a diversity of leaf forms in autumn-tinted hues, all delicately rendered, is designed for a boudoir, and may be accepted as representing a numerous class of patterns in which a cheerful brilliancy is aimed at. The application of metallic colors, judiciously applied to light up designs that would be otherwise somber, often displays an admirable degree of artistic skill in avoiding any garish aspect.

In not a few patterns we imagine we trace sunset effects, such as are induced by the reflection of the orb of day after it has sunk below the horizon; the colors in leaf and color designs looming faintly or darkly, so as to give the effect of distance in a declining and uncertain light, here touched by golden rays, there lapsing into the shadow. The finest effects in nature come from indirect light acting on and modifying inherent color.

Nondescript irregular bands, such as might be formed by nebulous matter floating in space, with bulging and retreating curved outline, held with variegated geometrical tracery, rise up perpendicularly among leaf forms and buds, scattered here and there, or glide serpent-like in various directions over the surface. They have little character; display ingenuity rather than beauty, but are acceptable to many for their subdued aspect, beautiful colored details, and absence of any strong emphasizing features. Hand-made and hand-painted patterns of plant-life on a large scale, in which the plant extends from the floor-board of the wall into a frieze of different color, the latter undivided by any molding, the pattern by no means crowded, with the more brilliant colors on the frieze, gives a novel effect to the two grounds.

Embossed "leather paper," strong and thick in body, displaying among other patterns compositions of the school of Raffaele and arabesques of Guibo Romano, the styles including Japanese fancies, richly colored, and often with illuminated colors, find application in dados and friezes. Some of this paper is left in plain tints for coloring by hand.

Louis Seize patterns in flock and colors still maintain their ground, flitters in those made for public places being freely introduced for their spangle-like effects under artificial light.

Tapestry in color and gold, the latter for the high lights, is wonderfully imitative of the Louis XVI. style, with its elegant and delicate traceries, appearing to have the preference. In moresque designs which, with their involved and graceful curves, maintaining unity by being developed from some center—in this respect differing from the Renaissance style, shading is liberally introduced, the leading lines being in sober tints, the offshoots in brilliant, pure and compound colors.

Exotic plants with full-blown flowers, and lightly ribbed leaves folding in upon themselves, with stalks in graceful curves, the stalks emerging out of spearlike blades of green, have a life-like appearance that renders them attractive, the few colors introduced being in three or more shades. The wide interspaces relieve from the heaviness which superabundant vegetation, as seen in tropical countries, presents.

More attention than ever is given to ceiling decoration in paper.

We recall no time at which rich colors were more freely resorted to for ceiling borders, centers and corners. They emphasize the horizontal surface. A handsome border consists of twisted coils, the middle portion as well as corner of each border circling round to admit a pictorial design in fresco. Another effective pattern consists of vine branch with blushing bunches of grapes on ground of cerulean blue. A beautiful ceiling border is in peonies of different hues.

The high class papers imported are noticeable for their solid colors. The excellence achieved by France and England in textile designs is tributary to their pattern business in wall paper, and so with colors, certain hues of which cannot here be approached.

The embossed designs on some of the patterns of the season's wall paper have probably never been approached in excellence.

WHILST it has been properly laid down that large patterns should not appear on the wall paper of small rooms, the introduction of small figures on the paper of spacious rooms may be allowable, if the pattern is a spreading and connected branch and floral design and not of the bouquet order.

WALL BRACKETS.—An Italian wall bracket consists of a broad rim of engraved looking-glass from which protrudes the head and bust of a Nubian slave holding in her outstretched hands two candelabra curiously carved in cypress wood.

NATURAL forms should not be conventionalized in any extreme degree in wall paper.